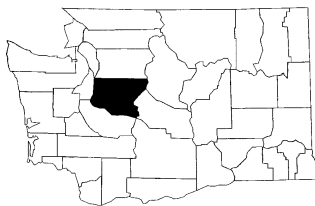


Health Care User's Guide

Hospital Charges By Illness Category

January 1999 to December 1999

King
County
Hospitals



North
Puget Sound
Region



For Clallam, Island, Jefferson,
Kitsap, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit,
Snohomish, and Whatcom
Counties

Southwest
Washington
Region



For Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor,
Klickitat, Lewis, Mason, Pacific,
Skamania, Thurston, and
Wahkiakum Counties

Central
Washington
Region



For Benton, Chelan, Douglas,
Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Okanogan,
and Yakima Counties

Eastern
Washington
Region



For Adams, Asotin, Columbia,
Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille,
Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and
Whitman Counties



Hospital & Patient Data Systems
www.doh.wa.gov/data/hospdata.htm

King County Hospitals

1999 Average Hospital Charges

King County Residents Treated In King County Hospitals:

Hospital Name	Stroke DRG 014	Pneu- monia DRG 089	Heart Failure & Shock DRG 127	Chest Pain DRG 140	Diges- tive Disorders DRG 182	Joint Replace- ment & Reattach- ment DRG 209	Medical Back Prob- lems DRG 243	Cesarean Section DRG 371	Normal Child- birth DRG 373	Normal New- born DRG 391	Chemo- Therapy DRG 410	Psy- choses DRG 430
Auburn Regional Medical Ctr	7,610	7,429	5,784	3,498	5,195	15,138	3,660	4,211	2,814	694	15,238	16,031
BHC Fairfax Hospital	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13,151
Childrens Hospital & Med Ctr	10,958	4,501	7,800	—	3,909	29,235	7,542	—	—	1,461	5,506	16,171
Community Memorial Hospital	4,988	5,897	4,143	3,561	4,955	14,732	4,478	5,658	2,949	816	—	—
Evergreen Hospital Medical Ctr	8,061	7,083	7,823	4,871	4,939	14,966	4,397	4,617	2,880	573	9,700	6,577
Harborview Medical Center	12,101	6,577	6,818	6,785	6,375	20,833	8,634	—	—	—	9,651	10,194
Highline Community Hospital	5,688	6,257	5,250	3,098	4,688	15,324	6,289	4,885	2,540	666	8,506	12,185
Northwest Hospital	6,522	5,977	5,324	2,442	4,663	17,460	4,083	4,759	2,642	675	7,925	10,343
Overlake Hospital Medical Ctr	8,498	5,890	6,984	6,612	5,381	15,057	5,287	4,535	3,192	768	6,848	3,402
Providence Seattle Medical Ctr	8,750	7,106	7,845	5,054	5,992	15,075	6,407	6,258	3,491	992	6,407	9,619
Regional Hospital for Respiratory and Complex Care	—	—	11,981	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Saint Francis Community Hosp	6,846	5,583	5,549	3,552	5,358	18,084	5,303	7,117	3,435	956	—	3,110
Swedish Medical Center	9,909	8,748	9,297	5,893	7,010	19,623	6,399	8,040	4,572	1,040	10,808	6,818
University of Wash Medical Ctr	8,842	6,925	6,651	3,932	5,049	18,631	6,160	6,212	3,392	868	8,210	9,310
Valley Medical Center	8,159	6,445	6,395	4,099	5,546	14,355	6,603	4,932	2,747	747	11,489	5,084
Vancor Hospital Seattle	5,857	13,115	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Virginia Mason Hospital	7,357	7,304	7,238	4,126	5,529	16,165	5,759	—	—	—	8,619	6,072
West Seattle Psychiatric Hosp	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8,102
Region Averages	8,245	6,944	6,989	4,211	5,615	16,765	6,043	5,805	3,328	823	8,639	8,451

King County Residents Treated In Other Regions:

North Puget Sound Region	8,361	6,260	5,233	2,997	5,423	18,008	4,770	6,183	3,209	830	11,027	7,480
Southwest Washington Region	7,563	7,314	6,625	5,866	—	13,904	3,907	7,490	4,041	978	—	6,471
Central Washington Region	5,597	6,937	5,207	4,706	3,512	—	5,232	5,821	2,996	1,339	—	10,616
Eastern Washington Region	11,447	—	—	—	4,556	14,170	5,121	—	—	791	—	8,127

Averages for King County

Residents	8,244	6,928	6,943	4,179	5,602	16,808	5,979	5,818	3,324	823	8,726	8,424
Statewide Averages	7,709	6,754	6,520	3,774	5,298	17,182	5,340	5,913	3,164	825	8,735	8,223

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Group Health hospitals do not report charges to the Department of Health.

North Puget Sound Washington Hospitals

1999 Average Hospital Charges

North Puget Sound Residents Treated In North Puget Sound Hospitals:

Hospital Name	Stroke DRG 014	Pneu- monia DRG 089	Heart Failure & Shock DRG 127	Chest Pain DRG 140	Diges- tive Disorders DRG 182	Joint Replace- ment & Reattach- ment DRG 209	Medical Back Prob- lems DRG 243	Cesarean Section DRG 371	Normal Child- birth DRG 373	Normal New- born DRG 391	Chemo- Therapy DRG 410	Psy- choses DRG 430
Affiliated Health Services	7,603	7,227	6,831	5,009	5,417	17,034	4,672	5,172	2,998	822	9,037	7,754
Cascade Valley Hospital	5,306	5,567	5,081	2,864	4,643	16,863	5,786	5,785	2,749	661	———	———
Forks Community Hospital	5,554	5,901	7,058	3,835	3,869	———	3,854	7,993	2,649	527	———	1,805
Good Samaritan Hospital	7,157	5,669	5,357	3,466	5,386	18,823	5,173	5,733	3,647	737	8,761	5,627
Harrison Memorial Hospital	6,257	6,010	5,971	3,679	4,624	14,695	3,536	4,821	2,644	648	8,340	5,802
Island Hospital	7,057	6,871	5,679	4,053	5,407	17,793	5,376	8,280	2,901	914	———	———
Jefferson General Hospital	6,305	6,101	4,785	3,593	3,899	17,253	4,576	6,547	3,504	600	———	2,181
Mary Bridge Childrens Health Ctr	10,713	7,576	4,327	———	9,761	———	5,281	———	———	1,199	11,091	———
Olympic Memorial Hospital	5,724	6,012	5,027	2,991	3,770	14,135	4,135	4,599	2,589	883	5,480	3,031
Providence General Medical Ctr	7,878	6,369	6,302	3,569	5,439	17,024	5,575	6,326	3,917	793	8,444	7,192
Puget Sound Hospital	7,541	8,392	7,065	3,642	7,410	18,963	5,376	———	———	———	———	7,810
Saint Clare Hospital	7,745	5,844	6,141	3,879	5,460	20,171	5,351	8,099	3,622	968	———	4,395
Saint Joseph Hospital	7,272	6,579	6,436	3,765	5,215	15,396	4,980	8,097	3,176	949	4,514	10,999
Saint Joseph Medical Center	8,771	5,692	6,635	4,066	6,010	19,352	4,907	7,712	3,367	990	11,278	3,739
Stevens Healthcare	7,889	5,617	6,338	3,513	4,831	12,076	4,150	4,681	2,611	639	8,821	7,615
Tacoma General Hospital	7,657	6,398	6,470	3,716	5,704	20,501	5,089	4,639	2,675	757	6,487	5,964
Valley General Hospital	5,030	6,137	4,629	2,956	5,477	15,572	4,416	5,738	2,555	728	———	11,666
Whidbey General Hospital	6,333	7,096	6,030	3,628	4,774	20,385	5,413	4,939	2,148	575	7,580	3,924
Region Averages	7,359	6,257	6,084	3,518	5,164	17,386	4,890	5,841	3,155	798	8,586	6,687

North Puget Sound Residents Treated In Other Regions:

King County Region	8,836	6,953	7,457	3,631	5,737	17,980	7,055	5,603	3,233	777	8,711	8,952
Southwest Washington Region	7,171	6,036	4,878	4,402	4,149	14,719	6,190	6,355	3,679	801	———	8,461
Central Washington Region	5,804	5,433	7,729	6,011	1,872	12,130	7,332	———	2,351	726	———	10,867
Eastern Washington Region	9,116	8,450	7,820	———	12,922	17,281	———	6,478	2,433	826	———	12,480

**Averages for N Puget Sound
Residents**

7,535 6,316 6,194 3,542 5,237 17,493 5,246 5,795 3,169 795 8,662 7,335

State Averages

7,709 6,754 6,520 3,774 5,298 17,182 5,340 5,913 3,164 825 8,735 8,223

NOTE: Values in *Italic* are based on less than 25 discharges. All values reflect what hospitals charged payers, but are not necessarily what the hospitals received or their cost of care. The numbers do not measure quality of care. In some cases, high numbers may be due to a hospital caring for more severely ill patients than average.

Group Health hospitals do not report charges to the Department of Health.

Southwest Washington Hospitals

1999 Average Hospital Charges

Southwest Washington Residents Treated In Southwest Washington Hospitals:

Hospital Name	Stroke DRG 014	Pneu- monia DRG 089	Heart Failure & Shock DRG 127	Chest Pain DRG 140	Diges- tive Disorders DRG 182	Replace- ment & Reattach- ment DRG 209	Joint Medical Back Prob- lems DRG 243	Cesarean Section DRG 371	Normal Child- birth DRG 373	Normal New- born DRG 391	Chemo- Therapy DRG 410	Psy- choses DRG 430
Columbia Capital Medical Ctr	7,297	7,793	7,746	3,714	8,344	18,886	5,240	6,951	3,407	791	9,579	5,268
Grays Harbor Community Hosp	8,622	9,177	8,321	4,398	5,187	24,824	6,026	8,385	3,432	1,007	—	8,802
Klickitat Valley Hospital	7,876	6,467	4,818	4,164	3,475	—	3,808	9,620	3,950	731	—	2,713
Mark Reed Memorial Hospital	—	5,810	3,611	—	2,551	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mason General Hospital	6,669	6,563	6,828	3,606	4,151	15,808	4,428	6,314	3,350	802	6,565	8,221
Morton General Hospital	6,078	5,333	4,207	4,588	2,691	—	—	8,344	3,685	990	—	3,112
Ocean Beach Hospital	4,965	4,693	4,767	—	2,798	—	4,107	—	—	—	—	—
Peace Health St. John Medical Ctr	8,525	7,418	7,329	3,980	5,632	14,056	5,513	7,406	4,198	899	6,507	6,969
Providence Centralia Hospital	6,683	7,194	6,845	5,360	4,960	16,137	4,755	6,933	3,450	965	—	2,460
Providence Saint Peter Hospital	7,380	6,292	6,521	3,227	5,389	14,638	4,719	6,181	3,766	772	8,542	9,472
Skyline Hospital	5,376	5,595	3,833	3,611	3,774	—	4,186	8,456	4,057	879	—	5,020
Southwest Wash Medical Ctr	7,044	6,331	5,827	3,482	5,042	17,160	5,465	5,708	3,061	828	7,205	6,593
Willapa Harbor Hospital	7,052	7,025	5,117	2,491	4,006	—	4,105	7,875	2,740	982	—	—
Region Averages	7,304	6,901	6,604	3,800	5,124	16,551	5,111	6,417	3,418	842	7,856	7,819

Southwest Washington Residents Treated In Other Regions:

North Puget Sound Region	6,632	6,169	6,338	3,342	5,502	17,614	6,506	6,343	3,267	808	10,031	5,685
King County Region	11,026	7,101	9,262	3,546	4,636	18,004	4,786	5,764	3,122	869	6,840	11,032
Central Washington Region	7,617	6,927	7,585	—	12,171	14,180	2,572	—	2,673	802	—	10,676
Eastern Washington Region	1,915	11,212	—	—	—	—	7,515	—	3,773	—	—	7,816

Averages for Southwest

Washington Residents	7,328	6,891	6,624	3,789	5,132	16,668	5,115	6,410	3,413	841	7,839	7,925
Statewide Averages	7,709	6,754	6,520	3,774	5,298	17,182	5,340	5,913	3,164	825	8,735	8,223

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Group Health hospitals do not report charges to the Department of Health.

Central Washington Hospitals

1999 Average Hospital Charges

Central Washington Residents Treated In Central Washington Hospitals:

Hospital Name	Stroke DRG 014	Pneu- monia DRG 089	Heart Failure & Shock DRG 127	Chest Pain DRG 140	Diges- tive Disorders DRG 182	Joint Replace- ment & Reattach- ment DRG 209	Medical Back Prob- lems DRG 243	Cesarean Section DRG 371	Normal Child- birth DRG 373	Normal New- born DRG 391	Chemo- Therapy DRG 410	Psy- choses DRG 430
Cascade Medical Center	6,107	7,840	4,265	2,591	3,648	17,271	5,852	—	—	—	—	—
Central Washington Hospital	7,611	6,213	5,944	3,599	5,104	13,708	5,304	5,054	3,199	896	8,899	6,103
Columbia Basin Hospital	4,283	4,736	3,247	2,829	2,654	—	2,659	—	—	1,481	—	2,544
Coulee Community Hospital	5,234	3,950	3,159	—	3,048	—	—	5,976	1,820	584	—	—
Kadlec Medical Center	8,325	8,061	6,357	3,535	5,298	15,746	5,556	5,102	3,089	904	15,003	3,263
Kennewick General Hospital	9,032	7,210	6,408	4,078	5,494	15,917	5,293	6,179	3,017	824	14,831	6,002
Kittitas Valley Community Hosp	6,614	6,661	5,268	3,018	4,746	18,630	3,823	5,625	2,880	761	—	—
Lake Chelan Community Hosp	2,906	6,783	6,273	3,621	4,934	—	3,086	9,220	3,791	881	—	7,269
Lourdes Counseling Center	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10,409
Lourdes Medical Center	7,427	6,882	6,060	3,687	5,179	17,331	5,143	6,267	2,409	660	—	3,415
Mid-Valley Hospital	4,687	5,358	5,236	3,899	4,610	19,044	3,475	6,400	2,494	887	—	3,144
North Valley Hospital	5,838	6,122	4,549	2,439	4,943	—	3,018	8,940	3,161	625	—	—
Okanogan-Douglas Hospital	4,204	6,064	3,652	2,415	3,771	19,853	3,129	6,498	2,216	588	—	1,787
Prosser Memorial Hospital	3,430	5,129	6,974	3,962	4,213	—	2,629	5,401	2,273	786	—	—
Providence Toppenish Hospital	6,553	7,708	7,036	4,798	5,227	9,980	3,848	5,498	2,243	916	—	7,748
Providence Yakima Medical Ctr	8,322	8,942	6,337	3,482	5,578	16,789	5,251	6,830	3,333	815	11,783	4,207
Quincy Valley Hospital	5,199	6,366	5,927	3,883	4,753	—	3,075	7,852	2,765	702	—	—
Samaritan Hospital	7,070	6,538	5,906	3,447	4,216	19,086	4,965	5,750	2,450	961	—	—
Sunnyside Community Hospital	6,985	8,035	6,973	3,299	4,290	17,033	4,433	5,628	2,449	884	—	—
Yakima Valley Memorial Hos	6,730	5,968	6,307	3,014	4,752	15,336	4,074	5,221	2,972	980	9,895	8,196
Region Averages	7,250	6,790	6,092	3,447	4,980	15,940	4,616	5,623	2,847	873	11,715	9,107

Central Washington Residents Treated In Other Regions:

North Puget Sound Region	7,134	7,600	5,234	—	2,672	14,562	4,297	4,752	2,818	799	—	8,929
King County Region	8,323	8,666	8,648	5,238	6,432	17,073	6,532	6,742	3,467	950	7,216	7,851
Southwest Washington Region	7,294	10,485	—	—	5,933	16,823	2,543	—	2,869	712	—	6,168
Eastern Washington Region	10,022	7,593	7,974	4,613	5,728	19,759	6,548	6,759	2,765	864	5,385	9,849

Averages for Central Washington

Residents	7,359	6,821	6,167	3,494	5,021	16,122	4,699	5,675	2,847	873	8,981	9,134
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State Averages	7,709	6,754	6,520	3,774	5,298	17,182	5,340	5,913	3,164	825	8,735	8,223
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Eastern Washington Hospitals

1999 Average Hospital Charges

Eastern Washington Residents Treated In Eastern Washington Hospitals:

Hospital Name	Stroke DRG 014	Pneu- monia DRG 089	Heart Failure & Shock DRG 127	Chest Pain DRG 140	Diges- tive Disorders DRG 182	Replace- ment & Reattach- ment DRG 209	Joint Medical Back Prob- lems DRG 243	Cesarean Section DRG 371	Normal Child- birth DRG 373	Normal New- born DRG 391	Chemo- Therapy DRG 410	Psy- choses DRG 430
Dayton General Hospital	4,403	5,651	4,037	3,407	3,555	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Deaconess Medical Center	7,893	7,687	7,465	4,731	5,212	16,522	6,016	5,090	2,573	759	8,702	4,204
Deer Park Health Ctr & Hosp	13,186	6,241	4,885	2,179	5,417	—	3,584	—	2,509	955	—	—
East Adams Rural Hospital	6,944	7,341	6,242	2,833	3,099	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ferry County Memorial Hosp	4,092	4,231	5,031	2,311	2,771	—	1,826	5,987	2,518	558	—	3,207
Garfield County Memorial Hosp	—	2,652	3,880	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Holy Family Hospital	7,194	6,448	6,107	3,603	4,940	18,205	4,635	6,130	2,762	817	11,770	2,886
Lincoln Hospital	5,662	7,517	3,927	3,050	3,912	—	5,137	8,354	2,868	1,044	—	—
Mount Carmel Hospital	6,439	6,933	7,117	4,496	5,903	21,798	4,028	7,298	2,508	730	—	—
Newport Community Hospital	4,737	7,530	5,102	—	4,013	—	3,515	7,142	3,097	842	—	—
Odessa Memorial Hospital	—	5,833	2,839	3,028	3,390	—	2,869	—	—	—	—	—
Othello Community Hospital	5,442	6,764	4,695	2,918	2,701	18,322	2,585	6,720	2,601	910	—	—
Pullman Memorial Hospital	5,230	7,409	5,365	4,644	3,321	22,880	3,579	6,828	2,607	608	—	2,044
Sacred Heart Medical Center	9,756	8,118	7,796	5,444	6,991	20,012	5,842	6,832	3,470	840	8,843	10,615
Saint Josephs Hosp of Chewelah	5,370	6,792	6,161	3,469	5,076	—	4,154	6,893	2,744	922	—	2,517
Saint Mary Medical Center	6,753	7,564	7,706	5,038	6,404	19,478	4,612	6,907	2,913	1,085	12,622	7,650
Tri-State Memorial Hospital	7,542	7,109	6,234	3,730	4,175	17,316	3,190	—	—	—	11,499	—
Valley Hospital & Medical Ctr	8,431	7,493	7,052	3,770	5,038	17,073	5,484	6,522	2,895	752	8,362	—
Walla Walla General Hospital	8,020	8,379	9,136	6,563	7,260	21,431	5,605	7,165	2,845	1,248	—	—
Whitman Community Hospital	4,778	6,200	4,729	3,333	3,498	19,267	3,001	6,261	2,498	794	—	3,147
Region Averages	7,892	7,221	6,755	4,082	5,308	18,654	4,991	6,201	2,888	820	9,568	10,227

Eastern Washington Residents Treated In Other Regions:

North Puget Sound Region	5,399	5,093	—	—	3,371	—	—	7,380	3,026	909	—	10,516
King County Region	15,640	8,550	8,440	3,745	6,738	19,405	6,317	—	4,190	746	13,349	10,305
Southwest Washington Region	11,177	6,184	—	—	4,448	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,899
Central Washington Region	5,566	5,161	4,194	3,949	3,582	18,296	7,209	5,181	2,672	864	17,604	9,439

Averages for Eastern Washington

Residents	7,886	7,190	6,715	4,078	5,295	18,664	5,051	6,178	2,885	820	9,977	10,200
State Averages	7,709	6,754	6,520	3,774	5,298	17,182	5,340	5,913	3,164	825	8,735	8,223

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Illness Category Definitions

DRG 14: Stroke Stroke and related conditions, such as bleeding in the brain and sudden blockage of blood vessels in the brain.

DRG 89: Pneumonia Age 18 or older with complications. Bacterial, viral, and bronchial pneumonia and pleurisy.

DRG 127: Heart Failure & Shock Conditions related to weakening heart muscles as a result of high blood pressure, rheumatic heart disease, and congestive heart failure.

DRG 140: Chest Pain Severe pain related to a heart condition.

DRG 182: Digestive Disorders Age 18 or older with complications. Conditions related to the esophagus, stomach, and intestines, such as salmonella, food poisoning, infectious diarrhea, intestinal parasites, persistent vomiting, heartburn, gas and abdominal pain.

DRG 209: Joint Replacement & Limb Reattachment Major lower joint replacements such as knees, hips, ankles; and major lower limb reattachments, such as foot and lower leg.

DRG 243: Medical Back Problems Non-surgical treatments for back pain resulting from disease, injury or malformation, such as disc displacement, lumbago, sciatica, scoliosis, fractures, dislocations, and sprains.

DRG 371: Cesarean Section Normal delivery of a baby or babies through incisions made in the mother's abdomen.

DRG 373: Normal Childbirth Normal delivery of a baby or babies without surgery.

DRG 391: Normal Newborn Newly delivered babies without significant health problems.

DRG 410: Chemotherapy Maintenance and follow-up drug treatments for cancer.

DRG 430: Psychoses Major personality disorders such as schizophrenia, catatonia, manic disorders, bipolar affective disorders, and paranoia.

Note:

The information in this brochure comes from data provided to the state Department of Health by Washington hospitals. The data are grouped into illness categories, called Diagnosis Related Groups, or DRGs. They combine similar diagnoses and treatments.

The charges listed are **averages** for items and services provided by hospitals, based on the number of patients and total charges for that illness as reported in the region in 1999. **Doctor fees are not included.** Figures include charges for the hospital room, hospital services ordered by a doctor (such as x-rays and laboratory tests), and personal care items (such as hospital gowns). Very high or low charges and very long or short stays are not included in the averages.

Because these figures are averages, they may be different from what you are billed.

Making Informed Choices

This brochure can help you make informed health care choices. It is designed to show how health care charges for similar illnesses can vary by hospital. By using this information to let your health care providers know you plan to take an active role, you can make them more aware of the need for affordable, readily available care.

The information in this brochure comes from data provided to the Department of Health by Washington hospitals. This data is grouped into illness categories which combine similar diagnoses and treatments. There is a brief description of each category on the inside.

The charges in this brochure are **averages** based on the number of patients and total charges for that illness as reported in that region in 1999. How long you are in the hospital, the level of care you receive, complications, special laboratory services, and fee increases all affect the charges for hospital services. Because these figures are averages, they may be different from what you are billed.

Use this information to talk with your doctor about how to get the best care while keeping costs down.

For additional information:

1-360-236-4328

or visit:

www.doh.wa.gov/data/hospdata.htm

Complaints about quality of care:

Hospitals: 1-800-633-6828

Professional Licensing: 1-360-236-4700

Health Consumer Assistance:

1-800-525-0127

Washington State

Department of Health

Hospital & Patient Data Systems

P.O. Box 47814

Olympia, WA 98504-7814

Health Care Tips

Take Responsibility for Your Health

Play an active role in the health care of yourself and your family. Be prepared for doctor visits. Don't wait for a medical emergency to compare hospital or physician fees and services.

Plan. Choose an insurance plan that best meets your needs. Select doctors and hospitals you trust, that work with your insurance provider and are reasonably priced.

Know your rights and responsibilities as a patient. Know your personal and family medical history.

Learn about your illness or condition. Gather information about the latest treatments and alternatives to surgery.

Act. Don't wait. Look into alternatives. Speak up. Tell your doctor about your symptoms and what you think may be causing them.

Ask Questions

You have the right to be involved in your care and treatment. Have questions ready ahead of time to ask your doctor, insurance representative, and the hospital:

- What do my symptoms mean?
- What tests do I need and why do I need them?
- What risks are involved if I have surgery?
- How long does the surgery take and how long do I need to stay in the hospital?
- How much of the cost will my insurance cover?
- What items and services are included in the hospital charges?
- How soon can I return to my normal activities?

Avoid Unnecessary Treatment

Your doctor's decisions about your care can account for as much as three-quarters of your medical bills. You can save time and money by seeking the best treatment for your needs. You can be more confident of your treatment and reduce unforeseen costs if you choose a good insurance plan, use preferred providers, and get second opinions. Find out your options by asking questions such as:

- Is surgery or medication necessary? Why?
- Can my tests or surgery be done somewhere besides the hospital?
- What other treatments are available?
- Can I make any changes, such as diet and exercise, that might help my condition?

Prevent Injuries and Illness

The best way to avoid medical treatment is to practice preventive care and create safe home and work environments.

- Get regular check-ups and physical exams.
- Take free health tests when they are available.
- Schedule the health screening tests recommended for your age, sex, and risk group.
- Select an insurance plan with good preventive care coverage.
- Wear a seat belt.
- Never drink and drive.
- Eliminate unsafe conditions at home and at work.
- Keep guns locked up.
- Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.
- Wear sunscreen.

Develop a Healthy Lifestyle

Another way to avoid illness is to develop lifelong habits that keep you healthy.

- Don't smoke.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat a balanced diet that is low in fat and high in fiber.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Stay mentally active and involved with self, family and community.
- Keep a sense of humor about life.

Examine Hospital and Medical Bills

Check all medical bills carefully for errors. Look to see if you have been overcharged, billed more than once, or charged for an item or service you did not receive. If you have trouble understanding your bill, ask your doctor or the hospital for an explanation. **Washington Department of Health does not regulate hospital rates or billing practices.**

Washington State Department of Health

Center for Health Statistics
Hospital & Patient Data Systems
P.O. Box 47814
Olympia, WA 98504-7814

This brochure is published to increase consumer awareness of health care charges. For additional copies write to the Department of Health at the address above or call 360-236-4328.